



CANADIAN COAST GUARD HELICOPTER CG253

The Canadian Coast Guard is known for its fleet of ships, but few realize it also operates a fleet of helicopters, which maintain and supply navigational aids on both coasts, the Arctic and inland waters.

The Sikorsky S-61N, the only one of its kind used by the Canadian Coast Guard, is based in Prince Rupert.

It's really a flying delivery truck, larger, faster, and able to carry more equipment and passengers than any of the Coast Guard's other 35 helicopters across Canada.

The Coast Guard's primary aim is safety at sea, so it must ensure that ships can navigate safely in Canadian waters. This is done through an extensive array of conventional and electronic aids to navigation.

The primary mission of all CCG shore-based helicopters, including the long-range Sikorsky, is installing, maintaining and supplying those aids to navigation — buoys, light beacons and light stations — in Canadian waters.

The number of aids to marine navigation in Canada has increased steadily over the years because ships are larger, traffic has mushroomed, and many new port facilities have been built. Several ships assigned to aids to navigation carry a helicopter on board, saving time and expense.

CG253, the Sikorsky's callsign, spends most of its time servicing and supplying the lighted aids to navigation from Cape Caution, just north of Vancouver Island, north to the Alaska border.

From the Prince Rupert base the Coast Guard services 156 buoys, 149 beacons, 299 lights and 14 fog signals. But the Sikorsky doesn't do all these alone. It is helped by the Coast Guard ships, MARTHA L. BLACK and CLOO-STUNG and, when necessary, the search and rescue vessels based in Prince Rupert.

The flying "truck" transports everything from mail to bicycles to the 13 manned lighthouses in the district. The most southerly lighthouse is on

Egg Island, in Queen Charlotte Sound, and the most northerly one is on Green Island at the northern entrance to Chatham Sound.

The helicopter has the distinction of servicing Canada's most westerly station, on Langara Island, the western-most occupied point of land in Canada. The Sikorsky also relieves some of the isolation traditionally felt by lighthouse keepers and their families while bringing in technicians to relieve the keeper of some of the more complex electronic maintenance work.

One of the assets of the S-61N is its fully amphibious capability. It can operate on water, where other helicopters can't go, and on land, where vessels can't go.

If there is a heavy, awkward load to be carried to a construction project, CG253 can lift it with a sling. On one occasion it assisted in carrying a

total of 36000 kg of material — tents, lumber, cement, reinforced steel and machinery — to mountaintop work sites for the Coast Guard.

The normal payload for CG253 is 1300 kg, including a crew of three — a pilot, co-pilot and flight engineer, who also is trained as an attendant for embarked passengers. The 1300 kg payload is about four times the rated weight capacity of other CG helicopters. Its maximum range is 750 km, but 300 km flights, twice the range of most other CG helicopters, are routine. Ten to 12 passengers form a typical load, but it can accommodate up to 26 persons. The service speed is 120 knots, somewhat faster than other helicopters.

The Sikorsky, U.S.-built in 1973, is equipped with full navigation, communications, safety and survival gear. The communications equipment includes marine VHF-FM and HF which links the aircraft with ships, light stations and coastal radio stations, and an airways VHF linking it with other aircraft. It has instrument flight rule (IFR) capability, radar, and Loran-C, a very accurate, long-range navigation system. As the helicopter often flies in poor weather along the northern B.C. coast, it relies heavily on navigational equipment.

These aids are particularly useful in search and rescue operations in which the CG253 is called upon to assist from time to time. It has the ability to undertake search incidents with its advanced equipment in any type of weather, but it is not equipped, nor is the crew trained, for dedicated rescue operations.

It can also carry out pollution control by surveillance of Canadian waters and assist in the clean-up when necessary.

For further information contact:

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CCG Western Region Aids to Navigation

| NAME | TYPE | BASE |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| MARTHA L. BLACK | aids tender/ icebreaker | Prince Rupert |
| GEORGE R. PEARKES | aids tender/ icebreaker | Victoria |
| SIR JAMES DOUGLAS | aids tender | Victoria |
| MISKANAW | aids tender | Fort McMurray |
| DUMIT | aids tender | Hay River |
| TEMBAH | aids tender | Hay River |
| ECKALOO | aids tender | Hay River |
| NAHIDIK | aids tender | Hay River |
| CLOO-STUNG | aids tender | Prince Rupert |
| HELICOPTERS (2) | aids servicing/ supply unit | Prince Rupert |
| HELICOPTERS (4) | aids servicing | Victoria |



Canadian
Coast Guard

Garde côtière
canadienne